

Mt. Equity Zendo Zephyr- May 2012

16 Precepts Ceremony Offered on April 22nd



Jido Jerry Lindauer and Tomei Tom Knapp recently received the 16 precepts at the end of our Earth Day Sesshin. A hearty congratulations to them both for all the effort put into preparing for this event. Those who have sewn a rakusu know how deep and wonderful this form of practice is. Both Jido and Tomei came to MEZ on multiple occasions to learn how to sew in the Dharma. We support them in their commitment to live out the 16 precepts of Soto Zen.

Buddha's Birthday Bash Celebration May 6th from 10am - 2pm



Join the community for a potluck celebration, offering flowers when everyone ladles water over the Baby Buddha. This not only celebrates the birth of the Buddha but also the birth of Enlightenment within ourselves. Pouring water over the Baby Buddha statue is symbolic of watering the seeds of Enlightenment within ourselves.

This is the best time of year to have your spouse and children come and be a part of your practice. We encourage musical offerings or any talents you wish to share with the Sangha. Buddha's Birthday is a time to mark spring in full blossom and to share in heart-to-heart conversation. This is a time to celebrate children because in them is great perfection, and yet they do not know it. Only in our aging into adulthood can we look back and see this beauty once it has already passed us. Yet, thanks to the teachings of "no self" we can recover our perfection just by seeing ourself in the baby Buddha or in any child.

National Day of Prayer

May 3rd has been designated as the “National Day of Prayer” and, according to our local paper, “Americans are preparing to exercise their freedom to gather, worship and pray.” The theme this year is “One Nation Under God” (based on Psalm 33:12).

I commend the efforts of the organizers of this event, but they don't realize the exclusiveness their language presents to non Judeo-Christians when they pose this theme. Our nation is not just composed of Jews, Christians, and Muslims, but also of Buddhists, Hindus, Confucians and Daoists to name a few. How can we incorporate these other faiths into the conversation and at the same time remain faithful to our own religion? Other possibilities for a theme may be, “One Earth, Infinite Truths”, or “One Trunk, Multiple Branches” or “One World, Under Infinity.” Yet, even these themes pose a problem because I am using words and language to try to convey truth, a truth that can not be limited by language. There are many Zen stories where the teacher tests the monk about the meaning of Buddha and as soon as the monk opens his mouth the teacher gives him 30 blows. And yet if the monk says nothing, he also receives 30 blows. He can't win one way or another. Truth can not be expressed in words nor can it be expressed in silence. It is bigger than both.

In the time of the Buddha there was a community in the town of Kalama that was troubled because there were many teachers coming to them each one claiming their doctrines were true and those of others were false. After some time of hearing these conflicting views, the people were confused about what to believe. When the Buddha came to the Kalama people they shared their concerns with him and he told them not to accept something because someone said it, or because it is a tradition, or because it came from a certain teacher, or because it is in scripture. Only accept something as true if in your own experience you can verify it as true.

The Buddha then went on to talk about greed, hate and delusion to the Kalama people asking them if these states of mind were of benefit or not to human beings and if they brought happiness or not. The Kalamas had a chance to think about these things for themselves and look into their own lives and experiences before answering the Buddha. When we verify through our own experience the validity of truths, rather than simply believing something based on what someone says, this is real freedom. Every human being has the ability to think for themselves. Before inadvertently imposing our faith on someone else we need to remember that all people are worthy of being treated with respect, regardless of their particular beliefs. If this is understood, then a National Day of Prayer, one that includes people of all faiths, can help pull us all together in one nation and in one world.

The world really needs our prayers in whatever forms, religions, and languages they come in. Ghandi says of prayer, “Supplication, worship, prayer are no superstition; they are acts more real than the acts of eating, drinking, sitting or walking. It is no exaggeration to say that they alone are real; all else is unreal” ([Gandhi's Autobiography](#), p. 96) These days I am witnessing the truth of Ghandi's words. But don't take my word for it!

Special/Upcoming Events

Buddha's Birthday, May 6th **10am - 2pm with potluck lunch**

Half Day of Zen (1:30 - 4:30 pm)

Zen and Yoga: Freedom in Body and Mind, July 7th

Beginner's Mind Zen, August 4th

Foundations For Meditation, September 1st

Full Day of Zen (10:00 am - 4:00 pm)

True Freedom, July 8th

Heat that Burns away Defilement, August 5th

Cooling Down the Mind, September 2nd

Sangha Practice Days

*** Come for all or part of the following days, including overnight, for the fun practice of socializing together as Sangha and enjoying informal meals.***

Saturday and Sunday, May 19th and 20th, 9 am - 5 pm

Saturday, May 26th, 9 am - 5 pm

Sesshin Schedule

Long Summer Sesshin with Doyu Roshi and Rev. Tom Wright, June 1st - June 9th

Mid Summer Sesshin, July 20th - 22nd

Candles on the River Sesshin, August 17th - 19th

Early Fall Sesshin, September 14th - 16th

October Sesshin, October 19th - 21st

***Note that there will be no Sesshin in May due to the Long Summer Sesshin beginning earlier in June than past years.**

Registration for Special Events: daishin@mtequity.org or (570) 546-2784

Note that Sesshin requires prior approval by the Abbess.

Weekly Practice Schedule

Tuesday Evening 7 - 9:15pm
(Includes prayer service*, zazen, reading and discussion)

Thursday Morning 6:30 - 8:00am
(Includes breakfast with Gyohatsu, or “The Practice of the Bowls”)

Thursday Evening 7 - 8:30pm
(Includes zazen, reading and discussion**)

Tuesday evenings we read from Dainin Katagiri Roshi’s excellent book, Each Moment is the Universe, based on the chapter “Being Time” in Dogen’s masterpiece, Shobogenzo.

Thursday evenings we read from the influential teachings of Uchiyama Kosho Roshi in the book, Opening the Hand of Thought.

5th Tuesdays and 5th Thursdays are reserved for other events. On May 29th and May 31st there will be no evening meditation.

Up-Coming Yoga Schedule at MEZ

Thursday, May 3rd, 10th, 17th, & 24th, 5:45 - 6:45pm

***This is a very gentle form of Yoga designed especially to lead the body and mind to meditation. All ages and body types are welcome to participate. No prior experience is necessary.**

Gratitude to the following people for making offerings of food and related items the month of April: Sarajane, Tomei, Nanshin, Koen, Daijun, Susan Gresens, Ten Ryu, Dendo, Keien, I’en, Shudo, Doko, Ling Mei Tsai, Michael Tsai, Misho, Michel Lau, Jido, and all others we may have inadvertently missed. Our heartfelt gratitude.

“Deep in their roots, All flowers keep the light.” - Theodore Roethke

The ensuing issues of the MEZ Zephyr will be bi-monthly starting with June/July.